



City of Seattle

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Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor  
**Department of Planning and Development**  
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 2404190  
**Applicant Name:** Brad Tong for City of Seattle  
**Address of Proposal:** 600 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Master Use Permit for demolition of a fifteen (15)-story, 417,000 square foot building (Public Safety Building). Environmental Impact Statement (Seattle Municipal Civic Master Plan) Prepared by City of Seattle is dated March, 16, 2000.

The following approval is required:

**SEPA - Environmental Determination** for conditioning only - Chapter 25.05, Seattle  
Municipal Code

**SEPA DETERMINATION:** ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☒ EIS\*

☐ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or  
involving another agency with jurisdiction

**BACKGROUND DATA**

**Site and Vicinity Description**

The subject site occupies an entire city block, block 32 of Boren's Addition, that borders Cherry Street to the north, Fourth Avenue to the east, James Street to the south, and Third Avenue to the west in Downtown Seattle. The existing site includes the consolidation of eight (8) parcels of land and a

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\* City of Seattle issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement in March of 2000. Conditioning of this application is pursuant to the authority granted by this prior document.

vacated alley comprising a land area of approximately 57,120 square feet. The site slopes dramatically from east to west, approximately 34 feet over a length of 238 feet.

The 57,120 square feet property is currently developed with a fifteen (15)-story city facility building (Public Safety Building) that has become mostly vacant due to recent relocation of city offices to other facilities in the immediate area. The physical shell of the former War Memorial acknowledging Washington State residents' sacrifices during military actions are located on the Fourth Avenue side of the existing building. Vehicle access to underground parking in the existing building is taken from Cherry and James Streets. No structures shall remain after demolition of the existing 15-story structure at the development site. Abutting the site to the west within the sidewalk area of the Third Avenue street right-of-way is an entrance to Sound Transit's bus tunnel which will remain.

The site is located within the Downtown Office Core Two zone with a height limit of 240 feet (DOC2-240). Within the immediate vicinity several government buildings are also sited, to the north and east. Within a DOC1-450 zone, City of Seattle owned buildings support a number of services within the Arctic Building and the "New" City Hall. To the south across James Street, the King County Courthouse is located. Subsidized housing above street level, with retail, office, and restaurant uses at grade are located across Third Avenue to the west. Other development in the vicinity consists of a mix of retail, high-rise apartments, office buildings, and surface parking lots in this area of south Downtown. The streets surrounding the development site are fully improved and active with both vehicle and pedestrian traffic in this Downtown core neighborhood. The Sound Transit underground bus Tunnel runs along this length of Third Avenue.

### Proposal

The "Public Safety Building Demolition" proposal is part of the City of Seattle's Seattle Municipal Civic Master Plan Project. The subject site contains a 15-story building occupying an entire city block slated for demolition to accommodate public- and/or private sector uses (up to 18-stories in height) including extension of the public open space under construction on the City Hall block. Underground parking would likely be provided for under any proposed scenario for the future development of the site. Utilities will be capped, meters removed for gas and water, electrical power and the sewer capped at the property line until future development commences.

Prior to demolition the City intends to hold a formal decommissioning ceremony for the Washington War Memorial. The granite panels inscribed with the names of the deceased will be crushed as part of the Public Safety Building demolition under the supervision of the Garden of Remembrance Steering Committee. It is not anticipated that soil or groundwater contamination will be encountered during the demolition and grading activity. Should contamination be encountered the applicant will submit a Cleanup Action Plan for soil remediation meeting all jurisdictional standards. The demolition of 417,000 square foot building requires review under the State Environmental Policy Act as administered by SMC Chapter 25.05. The City of Seattle's Fleet and Facilities Department acting as SEPA lead agency, issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement in March of 2000.

### Public Comment

The public comment period ended September 22, 2003. No written comments were received.

## **ANALYSIS – SEPA**

City of Seattle's Fleet and Facilities Department acting as lead agency has disclosed the environmental impacts of the proposed demolition in a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) issued in March of 2000. A supplemental documentation to the Final EIS for the Seattle Municipal Civic Master Plan was submitted on July 29, 2004, which generally illuminated details related to transportation and cultural and historic impacts. The Director hereby incorporates by reference the FEIS and the supplement to the FEIS. The supplement concludes that there has been no substantial change in impacts from those identified in the foregoing FEIS materials. The information in the FEIS, supplemental information provided by the applicant (plans, further project descriptions), and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision. Therefore, all review required under the State Environmental Policy Act has been completed for this application.

The Department of Planning and Development is reviewing the environmental impacts of the proposal in order to impose further conditions if necessary. This proposal is reviewed under substantive SEPA authority. Disclosure of the potential impacts from this proposal was made in the environmental documents listed above. This information, supplemental information provided by the applicant and the experience of this agency with review of similar proposal form the basis of this analysis and conditioning.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665) clarifies the relationship among codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states, in part, *"Where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation,"* subject to some limitations. Under such limitations or circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D), mitigation can be considered. The project is anticipated to have some short-term impacts; thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

### **Short Term Impacts**

The following temporary or demolition-related impacts are expected: temporary soil erosion; decreased air quality due to increased dust and other suspended air particulates, such as asbestos, during demolition; increased noise and vibration from demolition operations and equipment; increased traffic and parking demand from demolition personnel; tracking of mud onto adjacent streets by demolition vehicles; and vehicle/pedestrian conflicts adjacent to the site. These impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope. Although not significant, some of the impacts are adverse and certain mitigation measures are appropriate as specified below.

City codes and/or ordinances apply to the proposal and will provide adequate mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: 1) Grading and Drainage Control Ordinance (storm water runoff, temporary soil erosion, and site excavation); and 2) Street Use Ordinance (tracking of mud onto public streets, and obstruction of right-of-way during demolition).

Air Quality

Demolition will create dust, leading to an increase in the level of suspended particulates in the air, which could be carried by winds out of the construction area. The Street Use Ordinance (SMC Chapter 15.22) requires watering the site, as necessary, to reduce dust. In addition, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA regulation 9.15) requires that reasonable precautions be taken to avoid dust emissions. In addition to spraying water or chemical suppressants, this may require activities that produce air-borne materials or other pollutant elements to be contained within a temporary enclosure. Demolition could require the use of heavy trucks and smaller equipment such as generators and compressors. These engines would emit air pollutants that would contribute slightly to the degradation of local air quality. Since the demolition activity would be of short duration, the associated impact is anticipated to be minor, and does not warrant mitigation under SEPA.

PSCAA, Department of Labor and Industry, and EPA regulations provide for the safe removal and disposal of asbestos. However, no permit process exists that ensures that PSCAA has been notified of the proposed building demolition and that asbestos and lighting features has been removed from the site. A condition shall be added requiring the applicant to submit to DPD a copy of the PSCAA demolition permit prior to issuance of master use and/or demolition permit. This condition is imposed pursuant to SEPA authority to mitigate air quality, construction and environmental health impacts, SMC 25.05.675 A, B, and F.

Streets and Sidewalk

The Street Use Ordinance includes regulations that mitigate dust, mud, and circulation impacts. Any temporary closures of the sidewalk and/or traffic lane(s) would be controlled with a street use permit through the Seattle Department of Transportation.

The other impacts not noted here as mitigated by codes or conditions (e.g., increased traffic and parking demand from demolition personnel) are not sufficiently adverse to warrant further mitigation by conditioning.

**SEPA – CONDITIONS**

Prior to the Issuance of Construction and/or Demolition Permits

1. The owner(s) and/or responsible party(s) shall submit a copy to DPD of any required PSCAA Demolition Permit(s).

Signature: (signature on file) Date: December 13, 2004  
Bradley Wilburn, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development  
Land Use Services